

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1-8, 10-12, 14-16 and 18-23 are currently being canceled. Please note that Applicants are canceling these claims in order to obtain a quick allowance of this application, whereby the cancellation of these claims does not mean in any way that Applicants agree with the rejections of these claims. Applicants intend to prosecute these canceled claims in a continuation or divisional application.

Claims 9, 13 and 17 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 9, 13 and 17 are now pending in this application.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 9, 13 and 17. By way of this amendment and reply, claims 9, 13 and 17 have each been placed in independent form to include the features of their respective base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, presently pending claims 9, 13 and 17 are believed to be in allowable form.

Claim Rejections:

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,430,681 to Nagao; claims 2, 4, 15, 16 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagao in view of U.S.

Patent No. 5,233,414 to Kojima; claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,404,477 to Jippo; and claims 2, 4, 15, 16 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jippo in view of Kojima. Due to the cancellation of these claims in this application, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Therefore, since there are no other objections or rejections raised in the Office Action, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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